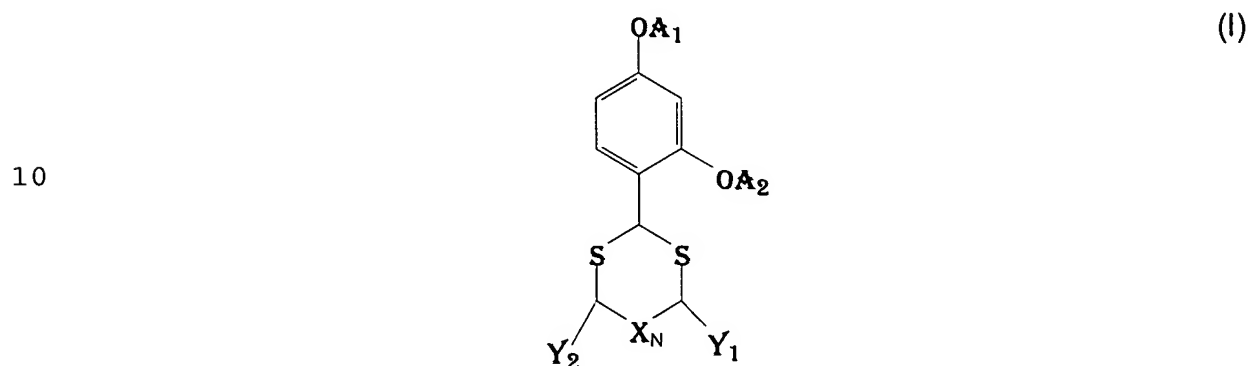


WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A cosmetic method of skin lightening comprising applying to the skin a composition comprising:

5 a. about 0.000001 to about 50 % of a compound of general formula I



15

Wherein

each A<sub>1</sub> and/or A<sub>2</sub> independently is = H, COR, CO<sub>2</sub>R, CONHR where R = C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> saturated or unsaturated hydrocarbon; and

20 each Y<sub>1</sub> and/or Y<sub>2</sub> independently is H, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> saturated or unsaturated hydrocarbon, or OZ where Z = H, COR<sup>1</sup>, CO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>1</sup>, CONHR<sup>1</sup> and wherein R<sup>1</sup> = C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> saturated or unsaturated hydrocarbon;

X is Carbon, Nitrogen, Sulfur, or Oxygen; and

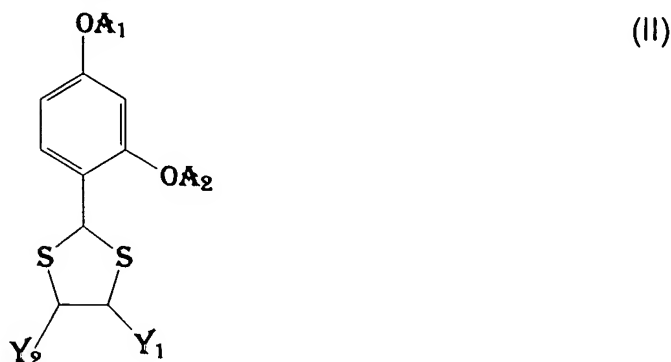
N is in integer between 0 and 2.

25

and

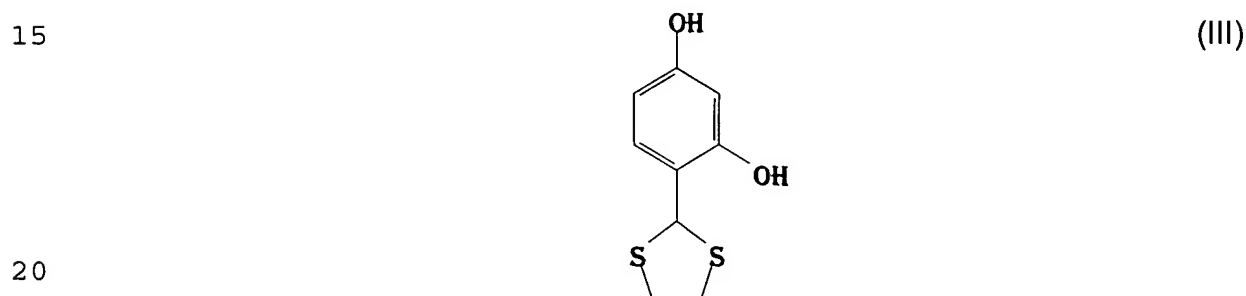
- b. a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said compound has the general formula II:



- 10 3. The method of claim 1, wherein said composition further comprises a sunscreen.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein said compound is a compound of formula III:



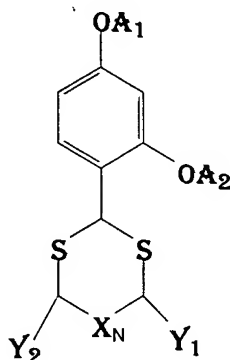
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the hydroxy groups of said compound are esterified with an acid selected from the group consisting of ferulic acid, vanillic acid, sebacic acid, azaleic acid, benzoic acid, caffeic acid, coumaric acid, salicylic acid, cysteine, cystine, lactic acid, glycolic acid and mixtures thereof.
- 25 6. The method of claim 1, wherein said composition further comprises a fragrance.

7. The cosmetic method according to claim 1, wherein said composition further comprises a skin benefit agent selected from the group consisting of alpha-hydroxy acids, beta-hydroxy acids, polyhydroxy acids, hydroquinone, t-butyl hydroquinone, Vitamin C derivatives, dioic acids, retinoids, resorcinol derivatives, and mixtures thereof.

8. A cosmetic composition comprising:

a. about 0.000001 to about 50 % of a compound of general formula I

(I)



Wherein

each A<sub>1</sub> and/or A<sub>2</sub> independently is = H, COR, CO<sub>2</sub>R, CONHR where R = C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> saturated or unsaturated hydrocarbon; and

each Y<sub>1</sub> and/or Y<sub>2</sub> independently is H, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> saturated or unsaturated hydrocarbon, or OZ where Z = H, COR<sup>1</sup>, CO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>1</sup>, CONHR<sup>1</sup> and wherein R<sup>1</sup> = C<sub>1</sub>-

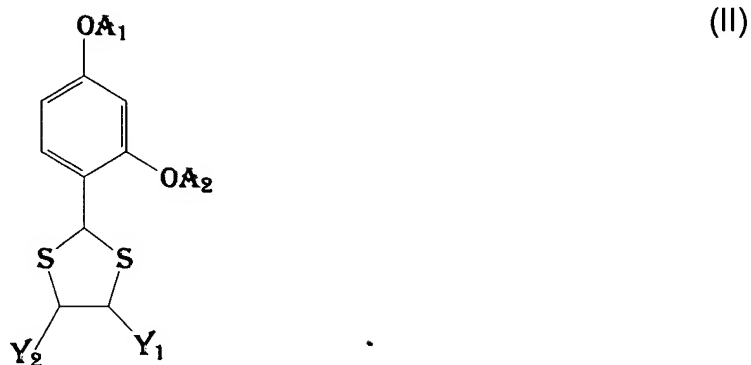
C<sub>18</sub> saturated or unsaturated hydrocarbon;

X is Carbon, Nitrogen, Sulfur, or Oxygen;

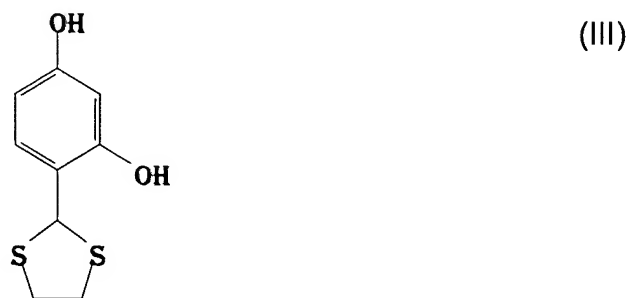
N is in integer between 0 and 2; and

b. a cosmetically acceptable carrier.

9. The cosmetic composition of claim 8, wherein said compound is a compound of general formula II:



10. The cosmetic composition of claim 8, wherein said compound is a compound of formula III:



11. The cosmetic composition of claim 8, wherein said compound comprises about 0.00001 % to about 10 % of said composition.

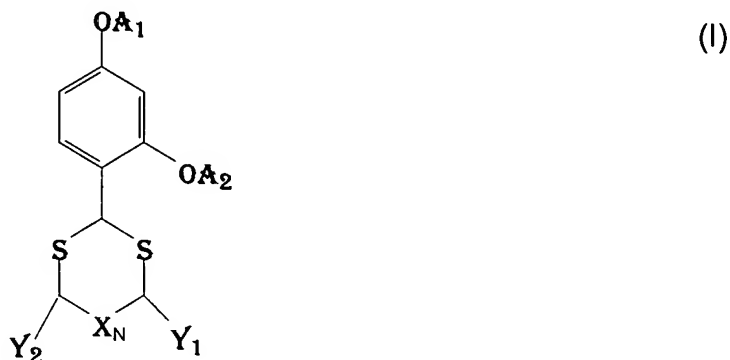
12. The cosmetic composition of claim 8, further comprising a sunscreen.

13. The cosmetic composition of claim 10, wherein the hydroxy groups of said compound are esterified with an acid selected from the group consisting of ferulic acid, vanillic acid, sebacic acid, azaleic acid, benzoic acid, caffeic acid, coumaric acid, salicylic acid, cysteine, cystine, lactic acid, glycolic acid and mixtures thereof.

5

14. A compound of general formula I

10



15 Wherein

each A<sub>1</sub> and/or A<sub>2</sub> independently is = H, COR, CO<sub>2</sub>R, CONHR where R = C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> saturated or unsaturated hydrocarbon; and

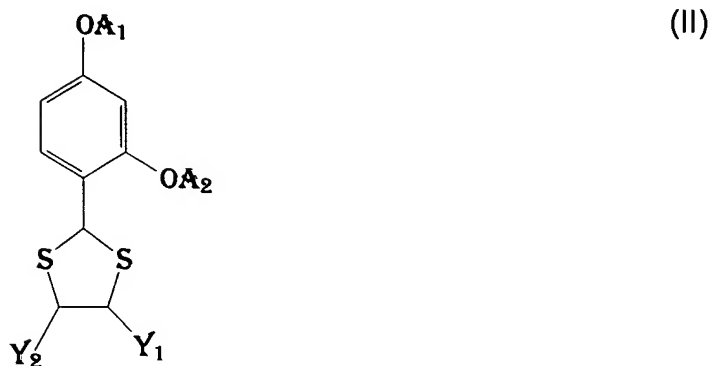
each Y<sub>1</sub> and/or Y<sub>2</sub> independently is H, C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> saturated or unsaturated

20 hydrocarbon, or OZ where Z = H, COR<sup>1</sup>, CO<sub>2</sub>R<sup>1</sup>, CONHR<sup>1</sup> and wherein R<sup>1</sup> = C<sub>1</sub>-C<sub>18</sub> saturated or unsaturated hydrocarbon;

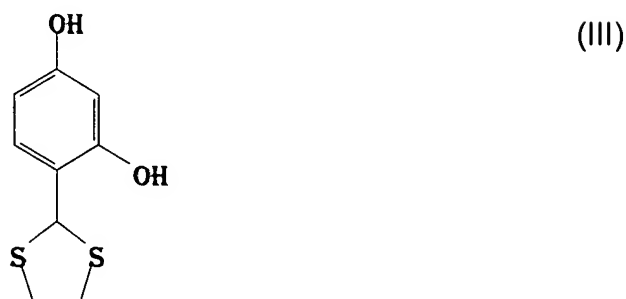
X is Carbon, Nitrogen, Sulfur, or Oxygen; and

N is in integer between 0 and 2.

15. The compound of claim 14, having a general formula II:



16. A compound of claim 14, having the formula III:



17. The compound of claim 16, wherein the hydroxy groups of said compound are esterified with an acid selected from the group consisting of ferulic acid, vanillic acid, sebacic acid, azaleic acid, benzoic acid, caffeic acid, coumaric acid, salicylic acid, cysteine, cystine, lactic acid, glycolic acid and mixtures thereof.

18. A process for synthesizing 4-[2'-(1',3'-dithiacyclopenty)]-1,3-  
dihydroxybenzene, 4-[2'-(1',3'-dithiacyclohexy)]-1,3-dihydroxybenzene, 4-[2'-  
5 (1',3'-dithiacyclohepty)]-1,3-dihydroxybenzene, or mixtures thereof comprising:

reacting

- (a) 2,4-dihydroxy benzaldehyde; with  
10 (b) 1,2-Dimercaptoethane, 1,3-Dimercaptopropane, 1,4-Dimercaptobutane, or  
mixtures thereof, respectively;

in the presence of an acid catalyst;

15 wherein said acid catalyst is selected from the group consisting of methane  
sulfonic acid, p-toluene sulfonic acid, sulfuric acid, hydrochloric acid, acidic  
resins and mixtures thereof.